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PARASITE

PARASITE

EVERY MOTHER'S NIGHTMARE
Mark Thomas
(Pan)

THE SLEEP OF REASON
David James Smith
(Century)

RE-EXAMINING THE EVIDENCE (2/6/94)
APPROACHING THE TRUTH (2/13/94)
Gitta Sereny
(The Sunday Review, The Independent On Sunday)

KP

THE POST MORTEM HAD SHOWN THAT JAMES HAD DIED FROM SEVERE HEAD INJURIES. THERE WERE MULTIPLE FRACTURES OF THE SKULL, CAUSED BY A SERIES OF BLOWS WITH HEAVY BLUNT OBJECTS. DEATH HAD OCCURRED SOME TIME AFTER THE INJURIES WERE INFLICTED, BUT BEFORE THE TRAIN HAD SEVERED THE BODY.

THERE WERE WOUNDS ALL OVER THE FACE AND HEAD; MORE THAN 20 SEPARATE BRUISES, SCRATCHES, ABRASIONS AND LACERATIONS. A PATTERNED BRUISE ON THE RIGHT CHEEK SUGGESTED A BLOW FROM A SHOE. THE LOWER LIP HAD BEEN PARTLY PULLED AWAY FROM THE JAW, PERHAPS BY A BLOW OR A KICK.

THERE WERE BRUISES, AND SOME CUTS, AROUND THE BODY, ON THE SHOULDERS, CHEST, ARMS AND LEGS. THERE WAS NO CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE OF ANY SEXUAL ASSAULT, BUT THERE WAS A SMALL AREA OF HAEMORRHAGING IN THE PELVIS, NEAR THE RECTUM, AND THE FORESKIN APPEARED 'ABNORMAL'; IT SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN PARTLY PULLED BACK. THERE WERE LINEAR ABRASIONS ACROSS THE BUTTOCKS, BUT THESE MIGHT HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY THE BODY BEING DRAGGED.

-David James Smith, THE SLEEP OF REASON.

After awhile it's so tight down there you can't even breathe. The pressure on your shoulders presses the pressure inside your head and back behind your eyes.

And thatdumbnigger that leans across the table and looks you in the face knew every button to push and checked off every blank in his book before you even sat down.

Thatdumbnigger is going to tell you how he does his job. What it means to him, his family and the society he cares so much about. And especially to the kids here in these pictures. Responsibility he mumbles.

And you're thinking he's as much a pervert as you. He's a bigger pervert than you. Everyday he's poring through pages and pages of little tiny tight mouths crammed to the edges of their skinny stretched porcelain faces with thick hard cock and screaming tear streaked babies on the naked laps of fatty Danes and bent pale faggots. Chubby Mexican boys smiling and pointing and bewildered. Laughing blonde cuties sitting spreadeagled on a cheap couch somewhere.

But you knew that before. And it did you no good. Hanging the similarities and differences between your tastes

Maybe you can't fault Gacy. Not like you can the geeks who write him. Sixteen years of a jailcell 'til you die could certainly be one of the best excuses for writing to every moron you can. Especially, if you're going to try and convince every one of them that you're innocent. Under the circumstances, what else have you got to do?

Of course, it would be nice if Gacy would just come clean in the end. Tell what got him off and how he'd love to do it again. And drop all the god bullshit and what else was he going to do with his freetime? I fucked and murdered thirty-three young boys and men just 'cause I liked to hear them scream and cry and beg for mercy. I like the way they bent when I rammed a shit-covered dildo in their assholes and the way they burned when I beat the fuck out of them. I liked to cum in wet, bloody mouths and I really like it when I see their fat mothers on TV crying about how their kids weren't queer. They were when they died, cunt.

But the chances are slim.

Maybe, then, you car

on hypocrisy, desperation, moralism, denial, gay liberation, domineering mothers or simple genetics and lack of brain cells is as sad as it is safe, convenient and isolated.

Anotherdumbnigger wants you to know he won't tell anyone if the detectives that handcuffed you wrong were to knock you down that flight of stairs.

Yetanotherdumbnigger pats you down and, loudly, wants to know if you got any more of those kiddie pictures on you.

The truth isn't down to degree.

Or luck.

Or sense.

The fat guy that wants to suck your dick. The one that wants to be pissed on and fucked hard up his ass, the ugly one that wants to rim and taste your shit. Whose ruddy complexion, acne scarred and bloated over fed beer face wants to be smeared with spit-wet cock and sweaty pubic hair stink. He wants his bulging hanging flab slapped and a heavy leather boot stomped on his back and his cotton mouth filled with clammy drops and spurts of thick piss soaked cum. He wants cigarettes burned out in his ass and the biggest, thickest fist he can find fucking jammed all the way up to his throat.

And he'll return the favor motherfucker.

You want to suck this here stubby fat cock, you want to suck and swallow some greasy ass juice and runny shit cum? You want me to punch your face in fag, you want to bend over and grab your ankles while I yank these hanging balls straight out of your sac?

This desperate fat queen's been around too long. His wife doesn't care more than she doesn't know and all his cop buddies understand but not to each other. Too long on the wrong side of the glory hole only lasts so long before these rutting pigs want more than pretend.

Chased the motherfucker through sixteen fucking yards. Motherfucker hit right in the face. Motherfucker's got a cock like a fucking horse.

You gimme six feet boy. You stay right over there and make sure I can hear your answers. I don't want no child abusing motherfucker up by my desk, you understand me? What's your full name and spell it.

Lotsmoredumbniggers wanna get their hands on you.

Lotsmoredumbniggers hope you make it to their section.

Lotsmoredumbniggers line up and follow suit. They open their yellowy cataract eyes and get right behind the other thick monkey stereotype. Drool some shit, tuck it in and head back home to their dirty fuck hole pit.

Dad's liking mom less and less these days. She's let herself plump out. Huge matted blue and brown varicose veins snarl their way up her meaty calves and wiry black hair sticks out all over her ankles and toes. And her arm pits, her fatty wobbly belly and her flat wrinkled old nipples. She sags and burps and farts and laughs right up his spine.

But dad knows how to stay fair. Christ sake, I'm no winner either, he thinks and smuggles a PENTHOUSE into the bathroom. Pays his cable bill. The video is nice when he gets a quiet evening and there's always Lake Street and Cicero -which he immediately regrets every time and swears he'll never be back again.

He keeps it in check. Tries to be careful, tries to consider all the options and possible legal problems. She's a good woman and I love her -giving her AIDS or gonorrhea fault Gacy. If just for bad entertainment. The worst scenario would be if he's really convinced himself of all the shit he's spewed for so long now. Could he really be no more than the fat jagoff he pretends to be? So full of himself that he'll die still trying to impress everyone just for effect? Can he really be such an average bore?

A lengthy interview in THE NEW YORKER this month points that way, unfortunately. And another in EXPRESSIONS OF DREAD pounds the last nail in his coffin.

ON HIS EXECUTION'S EVE, A SERIAL KILLER BREAKS HIS SILENCE promises the April 18th New Yorker. Their reporter, Alec Wilkinson, talked to Gacy over six visits -two lasted a little more than an hour, and four for between five and six hours each.

And Gacy is his usual, professional drip self. The same stories, excuses, denials and rationalizations. But, for once, the author pins Gacy down. Not as much as you'd probably like, but more than any sycophantic art-collector/autograph hound has ever tried.

TALKING TO GACY REQUIRES PATIENCE. HE DOESN'T LISTEN TO WHAT YOU SAY, AND CONSIDER IT, AND THEN RESPOND. HE MERELY DEFENDS HIMSELF.

There is a perverse pleasure to be had in post-crimes Gacy. The usual rule for most

Bulger, James's mother:

JAMES STARTED TO DIE FROM THAT MOMENT WHEN THE CAMERA CAUGHT HIM IN THE STRAND. IT WAS TWO-AND-A-HALF HOURS OF SLOW AND TRAGIC DEATH. I COULDN'T WATCH.

Smith looks directly at the sex and fumbles to pull out what Thomas missed:

THE EXTENT TO WHICH SEXUAL ASSAULT HAD BEEN PART OF THE ATTACK, AND PERHAPS EVEN THE MOTIVE, WAS A DIFFICULT ISSUE. IT HAD PROBABLY TORMENTED JAMES'S FAMILY, BUT IF THE KILLING IS EVER TO BE EXPLAINED, IT CANNOT BE IGNORED OR HIDDEN AWAY. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT OTHER INJURIES, PARTICULARLY TO THE MOUTH, ARE INDICATORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT. THE EXTREME REACTION OF BOTH BOYS TO THIS AREA OF QUESTIONING DURING THE INTERVIEWS -'THEY'RE TRYING TO SAY I'M A PERVERT'- IS SIGNIFICANT. IF THE BOYS DID DO THIS, IT HAD ALMOST CERTAINLY BEEN DONE TO THEM, OR BOTH, AT SOME STAGE IN THEIR BRIEF LIVES.

Gitta is hard and fast. She gets a police spokesman to admit what Smith only speculated -that there was a tear in James's anus and the probable cause was some batteries stolen by the boys at the mall and found near the corpse. Also, Jon's father admits that Jon finally confessed to stuffing the batteries in the child's mouth. She also discloses the overlooked importance of:

A SMALL QUANTITY OF FAECAL MATERIAL IN THE FORM OF A STOOL WAS PRESENT UNDER A BRICK ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RAIL ADJACENT TO THE BODY: BLOOD DRIPS WERE PRESENT ON THE OUTER ASPECT OF THE RAIL JUST ABOVE THE FAECES. ....IT COULD HAVE BEEN THAT LITTLE JAMES'S BOWELS HAD REACTED TO FEAR, OR TO THE INSERTION OF A FOREIGN OBJECT (WHICH THE POLICE HAD SUSPECTED ALL ALONG); IT COULD HAVE COME FROM THE BOYS, OR, OF COURSE, THOUGH LESS LIKELY JUST IN THAT SPOT, FROM SOMEONE ELSE ALTOGETHER.

The faeces wasn't sampled. Gitta argues that it should have been compared to the contents of James's stomach. How will we know the killing wasn't just a prank that got out of hand, or an unthinking mistake of frenzy; instinctual, bad seed, the never ending circle of child abuse, playtime got a little rough? Unless the two ten year olds decide one day to make full detailed confessions, the world and its guides; Mark Thomas, David James Smith and Gitta Sereny in the front of the pack, will never know for certain. And even then. Without proof -without a video camera buzzing away at the time of insertion or bootprint or "Come on, baby"- how can one be expected to know the difference between reality and imagination?

Gitta wants to know what causes "unhappiness". David James Smith wants the Bulgers to "forgive me when I also acknowledge the suffering of the two boys who were responsible for the killing, and their families"; Mark Thomas suggests that "James would have liked that", now that Denise Bulger can take her new baby for drives.

Fine. Commendable. Good luck.

Everyone is looking for the truth, or at least, the perfect photo.

One argument against child pornography is that the children in the porno continue to suffer by the image taking on a life they cannot control. Long after the crime that produced the picture is over, the crime continues to assault and haunt that person's well-being. Which, in the real world -one that expresses the handling of reality; one that can't be bothered with insulting small arguments constructed by lazy prosecutors and feminists' word fantasies- is not true. But in this case -the case of James Bulger and Jon Venables and Robert Thompson- it almost certainly is.

The photos that mum took of James sitting in his father's lap. The snaps of the little tykes laughing and skipping down the mall walkway. The school shots of Jon and Robert smiling in their neat clothes and (sort of) combed hair. Those images have only now started to live. And the once throw-away cuteness and everyday banality becomes a tool. A wedge in someone's destroyed life, a razor across someone's memory. Perhaps even a life affirming symbol of hope and change. A mother's obsessive madness or a pervert's fetish.

But never something as sick and thin and ugly as what a cop or a drunk might suspect. Or wish. It's so much more important. And real. As real as flesh.

head, Gitta's next project was THE INVISIBLE CHILDREN, one of the most succinct exposés on child prostitution ever published.

The uniqueness and intensive reach of the Bulger murder is perfectly summed up, then, when Gitta opens the first part of her investigation:

THE DAYS I SPENT (IN LIVERPOOL) LAST MONTH WILL REMAIN AMONG THE SADDEST I HAVE LIVED. BUT THOUGH JAMIE CONTINUES TO BE MOURNED BY THOUSANDS, I THINK THE SADNESS ONE FINDS IN ALMOST EVERYONE ONE SPEAKS TO THERE IS LESS NOW FOR HIS TERRIBLE DEATH THAN FOR THE TOTAL INEXPLICABILITY OF IT, WHICH THE TRIAL LAST NOVEMBER DID NOTHING TO DISPEL. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I AM REMINDED OF IN LIVERPOOL LAST MONTH WAS THAT IN ORDER TO COME TO TERMS WITH SUCH A TRAGEDY, THEY NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHY IT HAPPENED.

Ms Sereny picks up where both full-length books leave off and peels, plunges and spits back twice more. She is responsible for articulating the barbaric treatment of the children, due, she says, to the refusal of the authorities to fully investigate the backgrounds of Jon and Robert.

CHILDREN WHO KILL ARE NOT PRODUCED BY A CLASS, BUT BY UNHAPPINESS. UNHAPPINESS IN CHILDREN IS NEVER INNATE, IT IS CREATED BY THE ADULTS THEY 'BELONG TO': THERE ARE ADULTS IN ALL CLASSES OF SOCIETY WHO ARE IMMATURE, CONFUSED, INADEQUATE OR SICK, AND, UNDER GIVEN AND UNFORTUNATE CIRCUMSTANCES, THEIR CHILDREN WILL REFLECT, REPRODUCE AND OFTEN PAY FOR THE MISERIES OF THE ADULTS THEY NEED AND LOVE. CHILDREN ARE NOT EVIL.

She condemns the prosecution for refusing the children therapy before the trial, and also for only going so far as matching evidence to deed during questioning. The sexual details of the murder weren't defined, and it is those details that mean everything in terms of motivation and cause.

She then divulges new information missed in the other books: The attack was definitely sexual. All three authors give considerable weight to the questioning of Jon and Robert. The Thomas and Smith books come very close to printing the transcripts verbatim. You know that little James was walked almost two and a half miles before he was killed. You know about the paint splashed in his eyes and about the kicks and punches and pushes. You know about his crying for his mum and about his pants being pulled down and his penis being played with. You know about the bricks and rocks thrown at the child and the railroad article that killed him and the train that sliced the tiny skinny body into two pieces.

You know autopsy photos exist. Crime scene photos and all the written reports. And it's left to the authors to flesh those out for you. Thomas, in one instance, uses James's point of view:

IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THE EMOTIONAL STATE JAMES WAS IN BY THIS TIME. THE SHEER EXERTION OF A FORCED 2-MILE WALK THROUGH A WARREN OF BACK STREETS MUST HAVE BEEN TORTURE FOR HIS TINY LEGS. ADD TO THAT THE TERROR AND DISTRESS OF BEING LOST, AWAY FROM HIS MOTHER AND ENCOUNTERING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE TWO OLDER CHILDREN WHO TURNED OUT TO BE ANYTHING BUT FRIENDLY AND PROTECTIVE. HOW HE MUST HAVE LONGED FOR ONE FAMILIAR FACE, FOR SOMEONE, ANYONE, TO END HIS LIVING NIGHTMARE AND TAKE HIM BACK TO THE WARMTH AND SECURITY OF HIS FAMILY.

In another, he employs Ray Mathews, brother of Denise

"There they would get 'started' with girl to girl sex, alone. Verlyn was not going to attempt to introduce a novice girl to lesbianism with a half-drunk horny male trying to take control, endeavoring to ram his spurting cock into all six available orifices."

Along the way, Clark tells about the differences between Ken Bianchi and Angelo Buono and, not surprisingly, blames the murders solely on Ken. He never mentions the incredible difference between the stranglings in LA (where Angelo lived) and in Bellingham (where Ken was alone). He also provides a photo of Verlyn and her Hollywood tits, which is a nice touch, considering...

The latest issue of NECRONOMICON may appeal to those interested in very cheap kicks. This horror and gore 'zine has dedicated most of its fourth issue to "serial killer films" Its real worth may be as a comprehensive collection of titles rather than as an incisive overview. It touches on a few obscure titles but seems to spend most of its time on the old favorites like the silly HENRY -PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER and the farcical SILENCE OF THE LAMBS. The focus seems to be more genre than taste (which means no SALO, IN A GLASS CAGE, etc.) and is, therefore, nice but ephemeral.

or crabs even- I'd hate it more for her than me. An arrest would kill her.

And lord knows a minute after I jerk off, I'm not interested anymore. I mean, if I get off that way then what's the point of risking all the embarrassment and problems and pain and hate.

What is this infernal lust after flesh -the real thing? The colored dots on TV and in magazines should always be enough. Some smelly-breath'd crack pig with a body uglier than my wife's, a gross toothy zit cunt shaking her watery bags behind glass, a drunk temp with crows feet in the hard light and a half-filled bottle of VO that'd be of more use jammed in her shitted bloody asshole. Tampons.

Remember that cunt that blew you in your front seat when you were a teenager. Remember feeling her warm firm tits and being pushed away when you tried to dig at her sweaty bush. How you put her hand on your blue-jeaned hard-on and when she pulled it away, but didn't yell, you knew it, man, you were gonna get laid. And, for whatever reason, she thought a blow job was more acceptable than a full fuck.

But it only happens in moments now. It's not all the time -but, oddly, it is those moments that seem most important now. That seem worth living, that seem more vivid and real; that seem less trial and struggle and more honest.

And it just doesn't matter.

It really doesn't.

Until you're stuck getting your seven year old son ready for bed 'cause your wife is doing anything else but. And as he keeps running around the bathroom with his tiny penis wiggling up and down and you just don't think. And he giggled and cried and yelled and you stuffed, licked, sucked and started to beat. In a frenzy, your fists and feet pounding the little skinny boned body and bright cut screaming tears and wet and run and slip and squirm and rolled up into a vulnerable, fragile breaking ball.

And there's another guy -a well versed fag who's more than happy reading his copies of LOVING BOYS VOLUME ONE and TWO. He bought them over the counter at his local queer shop and they're quite wonderful. Published by Global Academic and written by Dr. Edward Brongersma ("one of Holland's most distinguished jurists"), the author makes a fine distinction between Paedophiles and Pseudo-paedophiles. He also discusses such relevant topics as SEX IN SURRENDER TO THE FORCES OF NATURE (volume one), ETHICS FOR BOY-LOVERS and THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL REPRESSION (both volume two). This guy files his dog-eared copies with its "nearly 200 examples of man-boy sexual behavior taken from published sources and private correspondence" right up there with PAEDOPHILIA -THE RADICAL CASE by Tom O'Carrol (Alyson), THE CHILD-LOVERS by Glenn D. Wilson and David N. Cox (Peter Owen), FOR MONEY OR LOVE -BOY PROSTITUTION IN AMERICA by Robin Lloyd (Vanguard) and GANYMEDE IN THE RENAISSANCE by James M. Saslow (Yale).

And lately he's taken to hanging out at the Schoolyard near his house. He sits and reads a paper and watches the boys at play. Nothing more. All he needs to do is watch a fresh smiling face -the kind that would make your mother moan- and gage the age. Then it's back home to his words and memories. And his Vachss books. And some Richard Hammilton and Sally Mann.

And there's Jack O'Malley. A "Chicago based special agent investigating child pornography for the U.S. Customs Service". In a Chicago Tribune interview some years ago, he

true crime aficionado is a healthy distrust for most authors of the genre. An acumen is developed whereby one sifts through the information and does away with the silly moralism, pathetic psychobabble and lionizing of any victim anywhere. It's odd, then, with Gacy one finds oneself immediately siding with (and trusting) the author.

Mr. Wilkinson puts up an admirable fight. Though he continually thinks of things he should have said, or was going to say, he still confronts Gacy as much as possible, even stating: I DIDN'T MEAN TO ARGUE WITH GACY, BUT I DIDN'T SEEM ABLE NOT TO.

and:

THAT'S CRAZY, JOHN. THAT'S THE CRAZIEST THING I EVER HEARD. THAT'S A LUNATIC IDEA. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE PROBABILITY OF SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAPPENING?

Even more amazing, is that Wilkinson was able to drag something new out of the old fat dying dog. He peeks through Gacy's infamous "Victims Research" folder ("larger than the Manhattan telephone book") and describes it such a way as to make it sound more like extreme fetishism than silly detective/rationalization garbage. Talking about some of the photos in the book, including color snaps of some of the victims' gaves, Gacy says:

WE KNOW WHERE THEY LIVED AND WE KNOW

told of one of his cases:

USUALLY WHEN YOU SEE THESE TYPE OF PICTURES, THE PORNOGRAPHERS MAKE SURE THE CHILDREN ARE SMILING. THAT WAY A PEDOPHILE CAN SHOW THE PICTURES TO ANOTHER CHILD AND CONVINCE HIM TO DO THIS SORT OF STUFF. BUT THE KIDS IN THESE PICTURES AREN'T SMILING. THEY LOOK LIKE THEY'RE IN A GREAT DEAL OF PAIN.

And when he testified before the Senate's Permanent Sub-committee on Investigations, Mr. O'Malley was asked to describe the sort of stuff he worked with:

EACH MAGAZINE IS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT IN THE SUBJECT MATTER PORTRAYED, BUT IT'S SAFE TO SAY YOU'LL FIND SEXUAL INTERCOURSE BETWEEN ADULTS -ADULT MALES, PRIMARILY -AND SMALL GIRLS.

He guessed that some of the children were as young as eighteen months old, the Chicago Sun-Times reported.

And in ENSLAVED by Gordan Thomas, a book published in 1991 by Pharos on "the chilling modern-day story of abduction and abuse in the global trafficking of men, women and children", O'Malley is again quoted during a lecture:

WHEN THINGS ARE MOVING ALONG NICELY, THE AGENT WILL BEGIN TO REQUEST THE REAL HORROR STUFF. BABIES BEING VIOLATED. LITTLE GIRLS BEING RAPED. LITTLE BOYS BEING SODOMIZED. THAT SORT OF STUFF REMOVES ANY WORRIES AN AGENT, OR I, HAVE ABOUT GOING TO THE VERY EDGE OF THE LAW TO GET THOSE SUPPLYING IT. THE SORT OF FILTH WHICH IS LITERALLY SICKENING TO SEE. STRONG-STOMACHED AGENTS HAVE THROWN UP AFTER VIEWING SOME OF THAT MATERIAL. WHEN THOSE LIBERAL LAWYERS YELL 'ENTRAPMENT', THEY SHOULD TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT HAS BEEN TRAPPED.

The difference isn't in what you can get or how much of it. Or how close you are.

It's how it fills your day.

It's what you take home and live with when you watch the most mundane TV show or eat a simple meal. It's all that runs through your perfect blood and makes your time -all your time- special.

It's the photo that is on everything here. No nudity, no violent act, no sex or blood action -not even in focus. Two ten year old boys walking inside a shopping mall; one leading, while the one behind holds the hand of a third, much younger and smaller, boy. The littlest child's other hand is tucked neatly in the pocket of the darling parka his mother bought for him. Shot from above and behind by a foggy security cam, the image offers, at once, almost no information and yet more than you can ever hope for. No faces, no leers or smiles or stern dedication. The shot even makes the youngsters appear older and taller than they were at the time. The natural glide; the ease of the boys and their symbiosis describes the entire scene -the murder, the lust, the media outrage, the parents' pain and the public fascination and distress.

All the rest is filler. Two books and an especially brilliant article (separated from thousands of reports and opinions published almost daily for the last two years or so) only serve as highlighter.

The murder of James Bulger is a spectacular crime. There is the actual murder, perpetrated by two very young boys who normally wouldn't even be thought of as having ideas equal to their actions. And it is this factor that accounts for so much havoc being wreaked upon their little heads -the inability of the public (in particular, the tabloid press and its influence on the cops, judges and lawyers) to adequately explain the crime, as well as the victim's family's needs, forced an incredible, bloodthirsty panoply of vengeance, torture and sick justice. The most obvious, and brutal, aspect being that to spare Mr and Mrs Bulger even more public pain, details of the murder were kept out of court -thus insuring the somewhat comfortable confusion that circled around the boys and their actions. Thus insuring the rather uncomfortable confusion that circled inside the boys and only exacerbated the pain of all the families (especially the Bulgers). The horny, hungry and powerful media is but one facet of this remarkable crime -but, unique to this, the media isn't its usual faceless black hole made up of "they", but rather a flesh and blood swarm of caring, brutally naive knives and prods. Reality like a tank.

And the boys.

And the baby.

And the mothers.

All three works are excellent. All three contradict each other in facts, as well as opinions, and yet all three work together to form one complete whole.

Mark Thomas was one of only six journalists allowed into the reserved press seats during the trial of Jon Venables and Robert Thompson. He was one of only five journalists allowed to attend James Bulger's funeral. As a regional correspondent based in Liverpool, he was there from the very beginning -following the incident as it unfolded in front of him and recording the process, pain and circus by way of first hand witness. He also grew close to the Bulger family and liberally quotes from day by day interviews with mum, dad, aunt and uncle, grandmother, and what seems at times, the whole of Liverpool who took the lad's killing to heart.

David James Smith enters with a different perspective. Written in a fairly silly fiction style, Smith pretends he's an unseen god scoping all the action as he looks down from on high. But in so doing, he embellishes more and drops the veneer of good taste (and compassion) that hamstrings Thomas. With more of an outsider's view, Smith is able to focus on the actual crime, publishing information that Thomas missed, as well as offering a clearer, less bitter, biography of Venables and Thompson and their families. Thompson's mother, in particular, is painted in a much different light. Something other than the fat, evil uncaring shrew that's pointed at by Thomas. It is Smith's avowed intention to illuminate the pain of all three families and, admirably, he succeeds. However, the real worth of this book is stifled a bit by the two Sereny articles. THE SLEEP OF REASON digs further under the skin of the murder of James Bulger -further than EVERY MOTHER'S NIGHTMARE- but doesn't scratch the bone like Sereny does. As such, it seems to fit perfectly as the second book -read in publishing order- on the case.

Gitta Sereny has an angry opinion and uses fact-filled interviews with the families of Jon and Robert, and also the investigating cops, to bolster and inflame her ire.

Gitta's previous books are all estimable classics. Her first, THE CASE OF MARY BELL, was about a remarkably similar case where an eleven year-old girl killed two small boys aged three and four. She is also the author of INTO THAT DARKNESS, one of the greatest books ever on the crimes of the Third Reich, being a series of interviews with Franz Stangl, commandant of Treblinka. Never turning her

WHERE THEY ARE NOW.

The days before his execution (May 10th) should be fun. Though Gacy promises it won't:

I'LL TELL YOU WHAT -I'M NOT GOING TO MAKE NO DAMN TED BUNDY LAST-MINUTE CONFESSIONS. NONE OF THAT SHIT. I'M NOT GOING TO PUT MY FAMILY THROUGH THE MEDIA CIRCUS.

A shame, really.

For those who want a re-tread of Gacy's every excuse and self-aggrandizing sex philosophy, they need look no further than the new issue of EXPRESSIONS OF DREAD (issue 3; 181 Mott Street, third floor, New York, NY, 10012). EXPRESSIONS OF DREAD is mainly a horror magazine featuring interviews with writers, artists, filmmakers and actors ranging from the very famous to the rather obscure. Somewhere in there is a good-sized contribution of 25 questions answered by Gacy in tiresome jail-cell lonely style.

Maybe this will be interesting somewhere down the road after May 10th, but for now, it's just a waste of time, even sociologically speaking. Gacy always sounds like his biggest problem with his crimes is that he might have to admit he sucked some dick.

Much more interesting is yet another article written by Douglas Clark ("The Sunset Slayer") in the latest issue of HEADPRESS (#8), finally getting some greater distribution here in America.

This issue, Mr. Clark reviews the case of Veronica Lynn Compton -the young lady imprisoned for trying to commit a copycat killing in the style of The Hillside Stranglings. Clark argues that, far from the accepted view of Compton as a serial killer groupie who was easily manipulated by Ken Bianchi into the idea of murder, she was actually a "screwed up female playing with fire, (who) got herself badly burned simply because a pack of rabid, ambition-bent authorities needed to nail every person even close to the Hillside Strangler suspects". She wasn't really going to kill a girl and dump some of Ken's cum at the scene. But "what harm could there be in pretending to go along, go north, and then simply tell him (Ken) no victim presented herself".

Once again, it is forever impossible to know the exact truth. Although so much of what Clark has to say is just silly.

However, Clark continues to be quite an inspiration. In jail for the rest of his life, he's at least spending his time on a subject close to his heart: "I have been called Verlyn's boyfriend, and I have intimate knowledge of every fact of which I speak."

Added to that, is Clark's charmingly lustful writing style: